

I am very happy to be here today to share this occasion with you. These of you who are graduating today, I am sure, regard the end of this school year with very mixed feelings. That happens to be true for me as well. For those of us in the Government who are forced to spend a good deal of our time worrying about the problems of South Vietnam, Graduation Day has the special meaning for us that it marks the end of a season of "teach-ins" on our Vietnam policy.

Where will it all end?

Can our methods succeed?

Can Hanoi call off the war?

Are we taking over the war?

Do the SVNese have the will to fight?

Isn't war a civil war, in which VC have the most adherents?

*Recent US efforts have halted rapid deterioration and reduced chance of sudden collapse, but have not yet achieved strong forward movement;*

The situation: The situation is stalemated, with slow deterioration like <sup>by</sup> to resume. US air strikes in North and South and ground deployments have improved "balance of morale"--resigning DRV and VC to long struggle with risks of escalation, and convincing SVNese of US commitment--but, effects may soon wear off, without further escalation, GVN remains preoccupied with internal politics; having won ~~support~~ acceptance by military and Buddhists, Quat faced opposition by militant Catholics, and perhaps segments of sects, Southerners and labor. Programs to win political support languish; <sup>nearby</sup> while VC continue to strengthen and extend their political control in countryside, by political action and organization backed by terror and steady guerrilla activity. ~~Psychological~~ Morale of ARVN/GVN ~~may~~ will be tested soon if VC, along with PAVN units, risk their yet-unused strengths in major unseen efforts: <sup>eg. by</sup> capture and defense of district/province capital, <sup>by</sup> proclaiming Liberated Zone in I and II Corps, <sup>by</sup> major defeats of ARVN in widely-separated attacks that exhaust ARVN reserves, or <sup>by</sup> spectaculars like major attack on Bien Hoa. *The DRV lacks interest in negotiation, despite prospects of heavier bombing,*

*believing with good reason that situation still favors the VC in*  
With US air support, ARVN has been taking initiative during period of VC inactivity, but

*mid- and long-term.*



Suggested lines of public statement if press query follows DRV protest over next MAROP:

The GVN has for some time patrolled the coastlines of Viet Nam in an effort to stop the infiltration by sea from the north. We do not have details on their day-to-day operations ~~(in Washington)~~ since there has been no US participation in such operations.



Need to disassociate 34A from Laos corridor strikes--as from de Soto

1. No US forces involved.
2. Public: ~~We don't know all DRV ops, we~~ GVN patrolling against infiltration; we don't know of day-to-day operations.  
((DO NOT: deny all knowledge that such operations exist)).

Rationale: a) If questions raised, don't want to have to deny all knowledge--especially if later surfacing may be desirable (or if GVN may surface; or if DRV can prove).

b) Once admitted, can contemplate SAR, CAP for SAR, air controller for SAR; perhaps even air support, sea support; ~~retaliation~~ air cover or CAP for GVN sea cover, pursuit; perhaps even retaliation for DRV counterattack or pursuit.

c) Urgency--program is continuing, and DRV has protested.

BUT: c) K, for home reasons, wants to surface all if any surfaced.

d) K dubious about admitting illegal acts if DRV doesn't.

We are aware that the GVN patrols the coasts of VN in an effort to stop infiltration; but we would ~~not~~ expect to be kept informed of the day-to-day program of their operations, since absolutely no US participation has been involved  
/or direct support.

## INDICES OF GOVERNMENT CONTROL

1. Can village chief visit his hamlets without danger?
2. ~~Canxhaxdx~~ Is hamlet chief fairly safe from assassination or kidnapping?
3. Are people willing to take part in hamlet/village council, accept offices?
4. Has there been a census/head count in hamlets or village?
5. Can insurgent groups move freely through area without info to officials?
6. Can insurgent groups recruit openly?
7. Do insurgent groups ~~have~~ maintain local forces who provide info and shelter?
8. Can population-control records be maintained--or do insurgents force destroying cards and forms?
9. Can radios (TVs?) be distributed, loudspeakers?
10. Will people do insurgent tasks--cutting roads, mining--without informing?

### VC Expanded Actions

1. A close sequence of regimental-sized attacks in widely separated provinces, to "whip-saw" ARVN(/US) reserves.
2. Full-scale simultaneous attacks with all forces (with PAVN reinforcements up to a division) countrywide, coinciding with a political or civil/religious crisis.
3. Attack with several regiments--including one or more PAVN regiments--on an enclave manned by US troops (e.g., ~~Danang~~ Vung Tau) or third-party (e.g. ROK) troops.
4. Regimental attack on major military target: e.g., Bien Hoa, Tan Son Nhut.
5. Attack with several regiments--including one or more PAVN regiments--on a provincial capital in the highlands: e.g., Kontum, with attempt to hold and defend.
6. Defense of a proclaimed "Liberated Zone" including parts of several provinces in central highlands (e.g., Kontum, Pleiku), defending with several regiments plus PAVN units up to 1-2 divisions.
7. Reinforce VC main force countrywide with many PAVN battalions and regiments, for expanded guerrilla operations and attacks.



pursued. Thus, just two weeks after her husband was shot down by the VC, Mrs. Hoang-thi-Con was knifed in her bed as she slept with her two young daughters. Despite her wounds, she managed to run away for help; but the terrorists' knives left her 11 year-old daughter badly wounded and her 9 year-old daughter dead. It is names and stories like these that you must read into the statistics I have given you -- statistics that tell of 11,000 civilians murdered or kidnapped in 1964, equivalent in terms of US population to far more than 100,000 Americans -- if you are to judge the impact of this terrorism on the will of the rural population to resist the Viet Cong. And yet, remarkably, that will persists, as is demonstrated by the continued willingness of South Vietnamese to accept the village posts that make them targets for attack, or to join the Popular Forces that man village defenses against the night raids of the VC.

→ *First,* What forces are required to combat <sup>the</sup> such organized terror? <sup>that I have described?</sup> The rule is commonly heard that government forces need a superiority ratio of 10 or 15 to 1 to master the threat posed by guerrilla forces and terrorists. This partly reflects actual experience in countries where insurgencies have been successfully suppressed -- e.g., Malaya. But it follows directly from the nature of the guerrilla challenge I have described to you.

Provided by North Vietnam with the critical margins of manpower, materiel and direction, the Viet Cong destroy and run, usually at night. They sabotage a railroad bridge, forcing the government to guard them all; they bomb a restaurant, causing all public places to be searched and protected; they assassinate a village chief, overloading the police and making good administrators hard to recruit.

With this background as a basis, we can address the two questions I posed earlier: the role of American ground and air power within South Vietnam, and of American air against North Vietnam. They are best approached by way of two other questions: What are the manpower requirements for combatting insurgency, and what is the importance of the support from the North in feeding the insurgency?

Not only must the government forces tie down troops and police defending the most important people and facilities, but it must have quick reaction forces in regional reserves, if they are to limit the guerrillas to hit-and-run attacks. And, to seek out and destroy an elusive enemy who has no responsibilities to defend territory or people and can choose to evade battle, they must invest massive efforts in searching and encircling operations.

All of this is beyond the reach of a force that outnumbers its opponents only 4 to 1 or less, as the regular and paramilitary forces of South Vietnam do today.

The main force units of the Viet Cong -- their well-trained, well-equipped, full-time regulars in organized combat units -- are now estimated to number from 38-46,000, and their irregular forces 100,000.

These guerrilla forces of 140,000 are too much for the present 565,000 South Vietnamese regular and paramilitary and police forces to handle if they are to provide, as I have indicated they must provide, security for citizens and officials and hamlets throughout the country.

Yet as the government forces expand, infiltration from North Vietnam continues to swell the ranks and provide crucial leadership and technical support of the Viet Cong. Interrogations and documents have so far established the probable infiltration of over 39,000 men since 1959, including 5-8000 last year. Considering the usual time lag between infiltration and this sort of confirmation, we estimate that at least 10,000 infiltrators entered in 1964.

The importance of these infiltrators to the Viet Cong is far out of proportion to their numbers. Most of them have been seasoned guerrilla fighters from the campaign before 1954. They form the great majority



of what the Communists call the "cadre": the organizational and unit leadership, all the way from central and regimental headquarters down to squad level. They extend the chain of discipline from Communist Party and military command headquarters in Hanoi down to the districts and hamlets of South Vietnam. They are the technical experts, the weapons specialists, the key communicators, the propagandists.

The locally-recruited or coerced South Vietnamese in the Viet Cong form the majority of the irregulars, the part-time guerrillas and helpers. But the infiltrators form the majority of the hard core Viet Cong; they are the brains and the backbone of the movement as a whole.

A newer type of infiltrator, swelling the ranks of the main force troops, is the young ethnic North Vietnamese draftee, sent down in units 500-600 strong; these form up to 75% of the infiltrators in 1964. Their appearance makes clear the determination of North Vietnam to maintain the flow of infiltrators despite the drying up of the pool of former South Vietnamese who obeyed the orders of the Viet Minh to move North in 1954. Still further evidence of this intent is the appearance, just recently ~~determined and reported~~, of a regular combat unit of the North Vietnamese Army, the 2d Battalion of the 101st Regiment, 325th Division, in northwest Kontum Province in South Vietnam. *There is some evidence at the moment that still other North Vietnamese regular units have made their appearance.*

Another way in which North Vietnam plays a crucial role in the support of the Viet Cong is the supply of arms and ammunition. *↑* You may have heard Secretary McNamara's press conference on television on Monday. As he pointed out, over 80% of the weapons requirements of the Viet Cong must be supplied from outside. Capture from government troops -- mostly

Popular Forces and regional militia -- has netted the VC only 14,000

*There have been a great many mis-statements in print to the effect that the bulk of the Viet Cong weapons are <sup>US weapons</sup> acquired by capture from government forces. A simple comparison of the actual weapons losses by government troops and the overall size of VC forces shows just the reverse.*



weapons over the last four years. The remaining weapons for their 38-46,000 main force troops and for their 100,000 irregulars have had to come from outside South Vietnam. Let me describe the representative mix of weapons captured from one VC main force element on the 5th and 6th of this month. It consisted of one US M1 rifle, four US carbines, two Czech assault rifles, one East German light machine gun, and the rest Chinese Communist weapons, including 72 of their latest rifles and carbines, 11 assault rifles, four light machine guns, two 60mm mortars, three rocket launchers and a 75mm recoilless rifle. Thus, of 101 weapons, 90% of the small arms and all of the heavier weapons were Communist Bloc weapons, nearly all Communist Chinese.

In effect: our combat and support troops and our air support are needed within South Vietnam, in large part because of <sup>the scale of</sup> past infiltration from the North; our air strikes against the North are needed to impede and deter further infiltration; and both are needed to ~~induce~~ convince North Vietnam <sup>the</sup> that ~~its~~ war cannot be won in the South and that ~~the~~ its national interests lie in a peaceful settlement. ~~It is the infiltration and support by~~  
It is the support, infiltration and management from North Vietnam that <sup>necessary</sup> has made/the current level of US support to South Vietnam, and particularly the current involvement of US combat forces. It is within the power of North Vietnam to make our combat involvement and current levels of support unnecessary.

North Vietnam can stop its infiltration of men and materiel; can stop its clandestine direction and encouragement of the insurgency in the South; can order a stop to the Viet Cong campaign of terror and sabotage in the South; and can remove its controlled units and cadres from the South. It is to help achieve these ends that the air strikes are now being carried out against the North; it is to help achieve these ends that US forces--military support and combat--are in South Vietnam. North Vietnam might take these measures as the result of negotiations, formal or informal, or in response to their own calculations of their prospects and risks. In any case, our own actions would be ~~guided~~ influenced by the facts and effects of what they actually do, and not by ~~their~~ promises or what they say they are doing.

VC Actions

1. Successive regimental-size attacks in widely separated provinces, to "whip-saw" ARVN reserves; or, near-simultaneous regimental attacks in two or three widely-separated provinces.
- 2.



MP's can take over police patrol; area physical security; resource/personnel control; police intelligence net. On spot in village.  
Aim at prevention of incidents, not reaction.

[ 1. Are MP's best for this advisory role?

Boats: No one is there, now, to advise.

2. Who is to be advised — SVN Police, Army, or PF's?

3. Must US advisors be down at hamlet level?

Cooper: are US qualified to advise, at hamlet level?

Training, background, knowledge, language?

What do we suspect needs changing in SVN; needs doing; what do we suspect US mission, ~~that~~ SVN are doing wrong?

A. Answer these questions here: reveal

1) Real uncertainties, lack of info

2) Differences, as to: a) facts, procedures, concepts; b) policy

3) Anticipated differences from Mission

4) Wash. consensus on certain answers — possibly different from Mission.

5) What it is we want Mission to: give attention to; change?

In some cases, intent to direct Mission attention — to what?

Are questions for us

B. Anticipate Mission answers.



D. Ellsberg  
June 28, 1965

## Retaliatory Program for Deterring and Responding to Major VC Atrocities

1. Recent ~~threats~~ DRV/VC threats against the lives of Taylor, Johnson, et al, raise the question of how to deter such attacks~~and~~ and what to do if they occur.

*(Without a prior policy of retaliation)*  
2. ~~It may~~ be difficult to retaliate specifically to the assassination of an American Ambassador: the more so, the more recent VC major acts of terrorism (like My Canh and Bennett) had gone without reprisal.

3. Therefore, we should <sup>now</sup> seek the opportunity to establish the ~~principal~~ principle that such terroristic spectaculars will be met with specific reprisals; we should do so by launching such a reprisal to a major act of terrorism (not an attack on ARVN) before any of the threatened assassinations takes place. Once one or more such reprisals had established a pattern, we would not be inhibited from retaliating for the assassination of a major official (as we were at the time of the Embassy bombing) and ~~thus avoiding~~ a major loss of face. Moreover, the VC/DRV would see this, which might deter them, or at least moderate their terrorism.

3. Such a policy would have the bonus effect of causing DRV threats of terrorism--such as Radio Hanoi's recent threat against Taylor--to rebound psychologically against their own population; <sup>once</sup> we had ~~retaliated~~ retaliated and had indicated a new policy of further retaliations, ~~such~~ an announcement by Radio Hanoi of new VC terrorism could cause more apprehension in the North than in the South.

4. Early retaliations need not punish so much as warn/threaten: by showing our willingness to take risks to our planes and risks of escalation, by symbolizing the possibility of new classes of targets being attacked. There need not be a "poetic" association between the target and the terroristic event; the point to be made is that such terrorism is a dangerous game (it makes us willing to accept new risks). New areas, new target types, new types of risks, are the criteria.

*an initial*  
5. <sup>A</sup> mission that would underline considerations (4) and (5) above would be a leaflet drop over Hanoi: with photographs of My Canh, a summary description of VC terroristic activities in the South, and a warning these activities of which Radio Hanoi boasts are dangerous for the North. This would not only be dramatic, and reach a significant NVN audience, but would symbolize our ability to overfly Hanoi. Question: Can we do it? Could we reduce the risk (not necessarily to zero--this is a highly important mission), e.g., by flying very low, by flying at night, by massive jamming, by air cover, by flying high--U-2's?--by warning privately that any use of SAMs would immediately result in their total destruction, or by other means? *Maybe if this is infeasible, leaflet-drops in new areas where the risk is less would be second-best.*

*It may not be too late (even 4-5 days from now) to relate this mission directly to the murder of Bennett & the bombing of My Canh.*



It has always been true that nearly all the heavier,  
crew-served weapons ~~have been~~ <sup>have been</sup> ~~also~~ come from outside; and where  
in the past, most of the small arms infiltrated from the  
North ~~have~~ <sup>had</sup> been French and US weapons ~~and~~ acquired  
prior to 1954, this year the VC main force units are  
being entirely reequipped with the latest Calico family  
of weapons, which must be supplied with <sup>7.62 mm</sup> ammunition  
entirely from outside. More than a million rounds of this  
ammunition were uncovered in one seaside cache in  
February.



and might be a "flash" point.

## 2. Political:

- A. SAM attack is clear escalation. What ~~will be~~ <sup>reaction of</sup> DRV/Chicom/Soviet/~~SVN~~ <sup>(See below; formal estimate.)</sup> ~~reaction~~ and attitude of allies/neutrals? (DIA working on estimate.)
- B. Reaction possibilities: Failure to attack would lift DRV ~~ask for and get~~ <sup>ask for and get</sup> ~~A. morale~~ (reduce SVN morale?), possibly lead ~~to~~ DRV to accept more sophisticated equipment from Soviets (KOMAR torpedo boats; SS missiles).

B. Attack might cause so great an international "flap" that DRV/neutrals, etc., would be pushed into "unconditional discussions."

- C. <sup>Early</sup> Attack might deter completion of other SAM sites if US <sup>privately</sup> communicated to DRV that same fate ~~would~~ awaited them. (No certainty about this, however.)

## 3. Reactions" to attack:

- or ask for more sophisticated equipment from Soviets,*
- A. DRV might be pushed to "discussions," recognizing ~~the~~ particularly if US indicated no SAMs would be permitted. Or DRV might decide that attack presaged others against Hanoi-Haiphong <sup>was</sup> or initiate an IL-28 attack. into SVN, figuring that